

Volunteers in the Courts News

Spring 2004

Foster Grandparents help youth understand

A Wisconsin program that provides foster grandparents for special-needs and delinquent children soon will celebrate its 40th anniversary. Along the way, thousands of Wisconsin seniors have donated valuable time and skills to thousands of youth in need. Foster grandparents have many roles. Typically, they are assigned to children with special needs – a broad category that includes delinquent youth at Lincoln Hills School (LHS).



As part of the Department of Corrections and the Division of Juvenile Corrections, LHS provides education and treatment to delinquent youth. The foster grandparents participate in the Victim Impact Program by telling students about situations in which they have been a victim or witness to a crime.

In existence since 1965, Wisconsin's foster grandparent program has become a national model. There are currently more than 200 sites in 24 counties throughout the state with a total of more than 450 volunteers who work with more than 5,000 children.

The foster grandparents receive a stipend of \$2.65 an hour, accident and liability insurance, meals while on duty, reimbursement for transportation, and monthly training. Volunteers must be at least 60 years old, in a low income bracket, and able to work 15-40 hours per week. Volunteers are paired with a child or children for an extended period so that a relationship can develop.

The program is funded with a \$1.7 million grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service and is organized through the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services.

For more information on the Foster Grandparents program, contact Susan Mueller, coordinator, at (608) 266-2695 or muellsv@dhfs.state.wi.us.

Helping to preserve history

A gunner for the U.S. Air Force 93rd Bombardment Squadron in the Korean War speaks of several missions on which he flew. He discusses his feelings when President Harry Truman called the Korean War a "police action". He enlisted in the Air Force despite his asthma and racial discrimination. He speaks of bombing bridges at the Yalu River, problems with Russian aircraft, a mission where his plane was hit by anti-aircraft fire, and the close-knit nature of his crew. He was honorably discharged from service and settled in Wisconsin in 1965.

The gunner's story is one of many that Outagamie County Court Reporter Jannell Mineau – along with fellow court reporters – will be transcribing in an effort to preserve American history as seen through the eyes of war veterans.

The Wisconsin Veterans Museum (WVM) began interviewing veterans in 1994. Concerns about the lifespan of the audiotapes and the need to make the interviews more accessible to researchers prompted the WVM to ask court reporters to volunteer their time transcribing the more than 575 interviews. Archives Collections Manager Gayle Martinson made a presentation about the new project at the Wisconsin Court Reporters Association convention last fall.

Through an agreement with the National Association of Court Reporters, the court reporters can receive continuing education credit for each interview transcribed. Mineau, who works for Judge James T. Bayorgeon, and Joan K. Biese, court reporter for Judge Dee R. Dyer, both will transcribe interviews with veterans of the Korean War.

“Joan and I are excited about helping the Wisconsin Veterans Museum to preserve our war veterans’ memories,” Mineau said.

The reporters

Court reporters currently working on the project are: Joan Biese, Outagamie County; Mary Lou Condon (not a court employee); Alice Fox, Price County; Kathryn Jagow, Ozaukee County; Jannell Mineau, Outagamie County; Jane Schneider, Ozaukee County; and Becky Thomas, Eau Claire County.

With 350 interviews still needing to be transcribed, the WVM needs more volunteers. Tapes are mailed to the court reporters and no time limit is given for transcription.

Those interested in participating may contact Martinson at (608) 262-0536 or gayle.martinson@dva.state.wi.us. Read more about the program at http://museum.dva.state.wi.us/RC_OralHistory.asp.